

EDITORIAL

'We have all witnessed extraordinary destruction and loss over the last few months with the floods and cyclone in Australia, the devastating earthquake in neighbouring New Zealand last month and now the horrific earthquake and tsunami which hit Japan. One of the important messages from these tragedies is that all of us can make a difference.' So said Prime Minister Julia Gillard on 15 March, commending the work of SchoolAid, a national schools-based philanthropy network that aims to 'empower kids to help kids.' SchoolAid is working in partnership with Save the Children to support Japanese children directly affected by the disaster. Such support is particularly important, explains Head of KidsHelpLine Wendy Protheroe, because it actually helps children here in Australia who've experienced disaster and those otherwise experiencing vicarious trauma as a result of saturation media coverage, as well as those in Japan. Crises of the kind we've witnessed have a further effect: they turn our attention to chronic disasters, an area where SchoolAid is also active. SchoolAid runs a literacy campaign to nurture and support kids in Australia's remote communities. Its 2010 Kids Helping Kids Awards likewise focuses on encouraging schools that support children affected by chronic disadvantage. Winner in the Outstanding Individual Teacher category, Moya Sharpe, for example, has developed a fundraising program at Sorell Primary School in Tasmania to help Cambodian orphan children in need. Sharpe and Sorell Primary are not alone. **T**

To donate to the SchoolAid Japan Disaster Appeal or other ongoing appeals, or for resources, visit www.schoolaid.org.au

FAST FACTS

The two online activities most popular with young people: social networking and online gaming, including massively multiplayer online role-playing games (MMORPGs).
 Number of active users on Facebook: more than 500 million.
 Average amount of time each user spends on Facebook each day: 46 minutes.
 Number of players in World of Warcraft, the world's largest MMORPG: 13 million.
 Number of players typically simultaneously online in World of Warcraft: 250,000.
 Amount of money generated worldwide by subscriptions to MMORPGs: US\$1.5 billion in 2008, forecast to reach US\$2.5 billion in 2012.
 Number of accounts registered for online virtual world Second Life: 18 million.
 Amount of money spent on transactions and sales of virtual goods in virtual worlds: estimated US\$18 billion in 2009.
 Average amount of time each gamer spends playing online each day: 68 minutes.
 Average number of hours less that young people sleep each night now compared to 10 years ago: 2 to 3.

Source: www.saferinternet.org

Answers: 1. to assist them in becoming more autonomous; 2. by opening the classroom door and spending time in their classrooms; 3. false – she actually says it's best taught in conjunction with traditional methods; 4. yes, according to Bell Shakespeare's James Evans; 5. learning through touch; 6. false, according to Leneen Forde; 7. the sending of sexually provocative material from modern communications devices; 8. being charged with creating and disseminating child pornography; 9. yes; 10. ouch, it's 'practise'.

QUICK QUIZ

1. The Commonwealth government aims to spend \$47.3 million over four years for start-up funding to provide schools with \$40,000 to \$50,000, for what purpose?
2. According to Russell Boyle, what's the best way for school principals to review the performance of teachers?
3. Caroline Cotton, writing on the benefits of problem-based learning, says the approach allows teachers to ditch traditional methods. True or false?
4. Is the word 'incursion,' in the sense of school incursion, unique to Australia?
5. What is 'haptic learning'?
6. Off-campus education is so high risk that, from a legal point of view, educators would be well advised to avoid it altogether. True or false?
7. What is 'sexting'?
8. What are the potential legal consequences of sexting by students, particularly minors?
9. Does the brain retain its plasticity – its ability to change – throughout a person's life?
10. Which is the correct Australian spelling of the verb, 'practice' or 'practise'?

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